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Implementation of recommendations on the six mandated areas of the Forum and on the Millennium Development Goals

Information received from non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council**

International Indian Treaty Council

Summary

At the second Global Consultation on the Right to Food, Food Security and Food Sovereignty for Indigenous Peoples, held in Bilwi, Nicaragua, from 7 to 9 September 2006, a set of "cultural indicators for food security, food sovereignty and sustainable development" was developed that could be used by United Nations agencies, development institutions, non-governmental organizations and indigenous communities.

* E/C.19/2007/1.

** The submission of the present report was delayed in order to ensure the inclusion of the most recent information.

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I. Introduction

1. The second Global Consultation on the Right to Food, Food Security and Food Sovereignty for Indigenous Peoples was hosted from 7 to 9 September 2006 by the Consejo Regional Autónomo in Bilwi, Nicaragua. The meeting was coordinated by the International Indian Treaty Council in partnership with the Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development (SARD) Initiative of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Centro para la Autonomía y Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas, Nicaragua. The meeting was attended by indigenous experts, including indigenous rights activists, community leaders and traditional food producers from six regions (North America, Latin America, Africa, Asia, the Pacific and the Arctic) as well as representatives of FAO, the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

2. The focus of the consultation meeting was to share experiences and build on previous work to develop a set of cultural indicators for food security, food sovereignty and sustainable development that can be used by United Nations agencies and bodies, development institutions, non-governmental organizations and indigenous communities. The result of the meeting are outlined below, as agreed by consensus of the participants.

II. Underlying principles for cultural indicators for food sovereignty

3. A definition of food sovereignty is a prerequisite for food security for indigenous peoples. The definition is set out in the Declaration of Atitlán. It states:

> Food Sovereignty is the right of Peoples to define their own policies and strategies for the sustainable production, distribution, and consumption of food, with respect for their own cultures and their own systems of managing natural resources and rural areas, and is considered to be a precondition for Food Security.

4. The underlying principles for cultural indicators for food sovereignty are based on:

(a) The rights of self-determination, free, prior and informed consent and full and effective participation of indigenous peoples at all stages;

(b) The fact that they are inextricably linked to indigenous peoples' right to lands, territories and natural resources;

(c) The implementation of real partnership efforts between indigenous peoples, key United Nations agencies (in particular FAO, UNDP, the Permanent Forum and the World Health Organization (WHO)), States and non-governmental organizations as underlined in the United Nations declarations of the first and second International Decades of the World's Indigenous People;

(d) Recognition of the common concerns and perspectives among all indigenous peoples and respect for the unique, distinct situations and needs of each indigenous people and each region of the world;

(e) The recognition that the right to food, food security and subsistence are fundamental inherent human rights of indigenous peoples and all peoples, as is the right of indigenous peoples to set their own priorities for their development.

III. Criteria for cultural indicators

5. Cultural indicators for food sovereignty should:

(a) Have a food sovereignty focus, in particular relating to the relationship between food sovereignty and traditional culture;

(b) Be practical, useful and measurable;

(c) Be broad enough to be applied in a range of regions and situations (where they could be made more specific and detailed if need be);

(d) Be able to measure trends and changes (increases and decreases over time);

(e) Use the proposed model that includes three categories (or themes) of indicators such as structural indicators, process indicators and results indicators;

(f) Reflect indigenous peoples' input and direct involvement in development, planning, data collection, analysis and follow-up activities;

(g) Take into account the role and contributions of indigenous men and women, youth and elders;

(h) Include the collection of anecdotal data, oral histories, interviews and other information provided by traditional practitioners, producers, elders and other community members, and other sources (studies, testing, statistics, etc.).

6. The definition of "development" to be used in the context of cultural indicators is the following:

> Development with identity is the project of life of the indigenous peoples based on their own logic and worldview. It is the natural growth of indigenous peoples, of their flora and of their fauna based on principles of self-determination in relation to land, territories, and natural resources. It is also respect for their individual and collective rights. It is the welfare and security of indigenous peoples.

IV. Cultural indicators

7. Two sets of indicators were developed during the meeting at the request of FAO and by agreement of the participants. One set contained a framework for indicators under each of the 11 cross-cutting thematic areas and the second set consolidated the broader list into five thematic areas to facilitate use and applicability by United Nations agencies and other development and funding agencies.

8. The 11 broad thematic areas as agreed to by the participants are:

(a) Access to, and security for, the integrity of lands, territories and natural resources for traditional food production, harvesting and/or gathering;

(b) Abundance, scarcity and/or threats to traditional seeds, plant foods and medicines, and food animals and cultural practices associated with their protection and survival;

(c) Consumption and preparation of traditional plant and animal foods and medicines, including ceremonial/cultural and daily household use;

(d) Continued practice and use of ceremonies, dances, prayers, songs and stories and other cultural traditions related to the use of traditional foods and subsistence practices;

(e) Preservation and continued use of language and traditional names for foods and processes (planting, hunting, gathering, harvesting, fishing, food preparation, etc.);

(f) Integrity of, and access to, sacred sites for ceremonial purposes related to the use of traditional foods;

(g) Migration and movement away from traditional lands as a result of rural-to-urban migration, conflict, forced relocation, land appropriation, climate change and economic necessity; return patterns and relationships to continued use of traditional foods;

(h) Effective consultations for planning, implementation, evaluation and application of the principles of free, prior and informed consent and the full participation by community members when development programmes are implemented by States, outside agencies or other entities and the extent to which cultural concerns are considered and addressed;

(i) Existence and viability of mechanisms and institutions created by, and accessible to, indigenous peoples for the transmission of food-related traditional knowledge and practices to future generations;

(j) Capacity within indigenous communities and peoples for adaptability, resilience, resistance and/or the restoration of traditional food use and production in response to changing economic, political and/or environmental conditions;

(k) Ability of indigenous peoples to utilize and implement recognized rights, legal norms and standards as well as self-government structures to promote and defend their food sovereignty on the local/tribal/community, national and international levels.[1]

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[1] The full set of indicators are available in the final conclusions and recommendations of the second Global Consultation meeting, at www.treatycouncil.org.